TOO YOUNG FOR A WOLF, BUT NOT FOR A WHISTLE

By IRENE ROBERTSON

A SMALL BOY tenderly touches a blade of his new skates and has no way to express his delight except by a whistle.

A young man admires the girl next door, and whistles his approval.

A father shows pride in a child's achievement by a whistle more expressive than a dozen words of praise.

Webster deals briefly with this amazing language peculiar to the human male. "Whistle—To make a shrill sound by forcing the breath through the teeth or lips. To signal or call by a whistle."

Columns could be added.

The mysterious art of whistling a thought belongs exclusively to the male of the species.

A girl is made aware of this disconcerting fact early in life by father and brother, later by husband and son.

A girl may learn to whistle, but it's simply a sound, not a medium of expression.

In time she may come to understand this wordless language, but can never adopt it as her own.

A boy, on the other hand, seems born with an instinctive whistleability, which grows in volume and scope along with his emotions.

Junior's first trill signals his initiation into a great brotherhood, and the woman who has been successively whistler's daughter, sister or wife finds that she has become, overnight, whistler's mother.

Now is the time for her to take thought, and classify the varying blasts and shrills emitted by her young. For by his whistling she shall know him.

By this means he will express joy, fear, awe; derision, contempt, admiration; betray guilt, give vent to frustration; show self-confidence, or the lack of it.

This sound, in all its variations, can be translated into a salutation or an SOS signal; a love call or an expression of scorn; flagrant defiance, or complete capitulation.

From infancy to dotage, whistling is the all-embracing and universal mood-indicator of man and boy.

PAGES of the PAST

The Colonist Warned Citizens In 1860 . . . .

Thieves in Town

The stories in this continuing series are taken from The British Colonist files of nearly a century ago. They are intended to provide glimpses of life as it was in Victoria in those early days. There was excitement and adventure; and Victoria was already known as the most beautiful town in the northwest. But it was gold on the mainland that brought the majority of immigrants to the still stockaded outpost, now sprawling far beyond the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company bastions.

VICTORIANS were intrigued, if not incensed, at the unfortunate experience of Marcus Rowe in April of 1860. He had had a rough time.

The old British Colonist frequently allowed comment to creep into its news reports, and the story of Marcus Rowe was no exception.

"The case of Marcus Rowe, who was so triumphantly acquitted on Saturday (April 14) on the charge of stealing a portion of the cargo of the bark Heather Bell on her late voyage from London to this port, furnished another evidence of the ease with which a respectable man may be accused of the commission of crime and his character blasted by malicious statements."

Rowe was arrested in Honolulu, put aboard ship for Victoria, here to face trial.

In the schooner which brought him to Victoria "he was subjected to every indignity. A small room, hardly large enough for him to stand upright or to stretch his limbs, was constructed on the deck, and he was compelled to subsist upon food of the meanest and most scanty description," The British Colonist continued.

"More like a wild beast than a human being Rowe lived—if living it can be called—for more than a month in this cave or den; and on the arrival of the vessel in this port he was handed over to the civil authorities and confined to jail.

"Fortunately, it chanced that several of our citizens had been acquainted with the prisoner years ago, and knew him to be of good character.

"H. P. P. Crease was engaged as counsel, and the result was, after a long and patient investigation, the triumphant acquittal of the accused, notwithstanding a formidable array of witnesses on the opposite side.

"The result of this trial should prove a warning to our ship-masters in future — and teach them to take the evidence of parties unknown to them with many grains of allowance."

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But if Marcus Rowe was acquitted, there was still a number of characters loose in Victoria who very certainly should have been in jail.

During this period break-ins were nightly occurrences.

For instance, April 14 saw a burglarly at Wilson's lumber yard of Wharf Street, although the amount of the loss was small; and Copperman's store on Johnson, between Store and Wharf Streets, was entered and ransacked and an undetermined amount of goods carried off.

The same night the McCauley home on Humboldt Street was target of thieves. It stood close to the old cathedral, in a quiet and sedate part of town. But that night shots rang out as the homeowner spotted an intruder.

At 2 a.m. Sunday the J. T. Pidwell home was the scene of a break-in for the second time in as many weeks. One of two thieves had been overpowered by Pidwell, a guest and the elder Pidwell boy on that first occasion, and it was only by the most extraordinary chance that there was not a killing. Twice one of the thieves fired at close range, but both times missed his mark.

On this second intrusion, Daniel Adams, who was actual owner of the house and residing here, chased a thief up Yates Street, firing as he ran.

That same morning, oddly enough, the police courtroom was selected as a likely spot for loot. The court was in the old View Street police barracks, but there was little of value for a thief. Apparently the burglar went away empty-handed, although in ransacking the place he had turned out drawers and scattered papers and generally made a mess of the courtroom.

"We would advise our citizens to be on their guard against these midnight robbers. The fastenings of every door should be well examined before retiring for the night and every possible precaution taken.

"There is hardly any doubt but an organized band of thieves has made this place its headquarters," said The Colonist.

No doubt whatever, it would seem.